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Cotton Defoliation Decisions

Cotton requires about 155 days from planting to harvest in Florida. Important management decisions have to be made throughout the growing season, but large amounts of profit can be lost if proper decisions about defoliation and boll opening are not made prior to storage in modules. Stain from poorly defoliated plants and moisture from the green tissue cause the biggest loss in quality.

There are several ways to determine when to defoliate cotton. An old rule of thumb is to defoliate when 60% of the bolls are open. Another method is nodes above cracked bolls (NACB). Research has shown that cotton with four nodes above the highest cracked boll can be defoliated without significant weight or quality loss. If NACB counts average five or more, defoliant applications should be delayed. Bolls set in mid-summer are usually the largest and mature in 40 to 50 days, while the bolls set in August are smaller, take 60 days or longer to mature, and often contribute little to final yield. Those late flowers look attractive and may give the appearance of adding yield, but should not be given preference over the fruit that was set during the first 3 to 4 weeks of bloom. It has been shown many times that the fruit set during the first 4 weeks of bloom normally contributes 90 to 95% of the total yield of the cotton crop.

David Wright

Small Grain and Ryegrass Variety Information for 2005-2006

Information on ryegrass and small grain varieties for Florida and Georgia can be found at www.griffin.uga.edu/sevt.

David Wright

Peanut Planting Date

Tomato spotted wilt virus (TSWV) has dictated the planting date for peanut over the past several years since TSWV has impacted yields due to early planting. This disease has to do with high thrips number that vector the disease and infects the plants. Thrips numbers have generally declined rapidly in May result in less TSWV from May planting. However, there appears to be a shift in populations from year to year and the planting date continues to be pushed later in May. Additional research needs to be done in this area to determine if earlier planting could be made instead of delaying until mid-May. Modeling work with the PnutGro model in Gainesville indicates that the highest yield could be expected from an April 15 planting. It was noted that planting on April 1 would likely result in a 6-8% yield decrease while a May 1 planting date would decrease yield by approximately 1-2%. However, the Gainesville area has not had the spotted wilt pressure that most of the other areas in the Southeast have experienced. Variety selection is critical to keeping this disease at low levels and the TSWV index should be followed as closely as possible to obtain low levels of the disease and high yields. This index is modified each year to keep growers up to date with latest research findings.

David Wright

Asian Soybean Rust Update

Asian soybean rust has been identified in all of the major soybean producing counties in Florida with most of the sentinel plots testing positive. We have monitored these plots throughout the season and have watched the disease progress. Although dry weather in late August and early September

slowed the disease progress, some plots had severe infestation and were completely defoliated. Fortunately, only a few commercial fields had the disease bad enough that they were completely defoliated. Other commercial fields were found to have the disease early, but were sprayed and apparently kept the disease in check.

Fungicide trails were done this year and good rust control was observed. This led to many of the soybean producing states in the mid-west to closely watch the reports from Florida. Additionally, many leading universities have been sending scientists down to work on various aspects of the disease. Many of the county agents with sentinel plots have also hosted farmers from the mid-west that wanted to see the disease and its effects.

Asian soybean rust has stayed in the south this year being found widely on both soybean and kudzu. No other legumes or plants have been found to have rust. Although volunteer cowpea grew in some severely infected soybean sentinel plots, no symptoms on cowpea were observed. Much research effort is being expended to find out about this disease and sentinel plots in all of the soybean producing states saved U.S. growers over a billion dollars this year by not spraying one time.

David Wright & Mark Marois

Finding Herbicide Labels

The herbicide market of recent years has seen numerous company mergers, new names for old products, many generics, and even some new herbicides. This means that many product trade names and herbicide labels are changing every year. Although the changes to the label may not be large, the

subtle verbiage that extension personnel use when making precise recommendations is constantly changing. Therefore it pays to have up-to-date product labels at your fingertips.

The best source for the most recent herbicide information is at www.cdms.net. This website has become the information repository for most all reputable herbicide manufactures. This means that herbicide labels, complete with all state and supplemental labels, will often appear on CDMS before anywhere else. So bookmarking this site is a good idea for everyone.

However, herbicide labels are often several pages thick and can make finding specific information difficult. In this case, please consult the IFAS herbicide recommendations found at edis.ifas.ufl.edu. The EDIS website contains weed control recommendations for all major agronomic crops and each of these guides are updated annually to incorporate the latest changes. Jason Ferrell

Herbicide Scams

There has been a recent spike in the number of growers being called concerning herbicide products that supposedly kill weeds for years. At least two “products” have been brought to our attention and they *do not* exist. In one case, the caller would not tell his/her name, the company that makes the product, a contact number or an address. The caller stated that the product would be sent for \$300.00 and would control tropical soda apple for 3 years. Thankfully, no sale was made.

We attempted to find the products in question. Upon investigation of herbicide

labels, there were no products with the names provided. If someone calls and offers a product that will control a weed for 3 years, one has to wonder about the validity of the call. Additionally, if it kills a particular weed for 3 years, think what that may do to your desirable species; it will likely kill them also (even if it is a real product).

There are many generic products on the market today making it difficult to stay abreast of all the information. However, it is important that growers rely upon University of Florida-IFAS weed control recommendations. If you have questions or have never heard of a particular product, contact your county agent to ensure that the product exists and is labeled for use in Florida.

Brent Sellers

Pesticide Information Available on the Web

While doing an information search on MSN's search engine this week, I obtained 108,322 hits upon entering the key words, "pesticide information." Where would one even begin? Most people, including myself, don't have the time to sort through the myriad of available sites. But, I do have a short-list of sites that I keep bookmarked for the frequent uses I need associated with the work of the UF/IFAS Pesticide Information Office. Here are a few samplings along with a brief description of their content.

UF/IFAS Pesticide Information Office: <http://pested.ifas.ufl.edu/>. This site contains information about certification and licensing of pesticide applicators in Florida. Our state's laws governing these activities are extremely complex, but this site can help

sort the confusion. You can also check listings of state-approved CEU programs offered within the state as well as across the U.S. Many of our fact sheets, including Florida's Pest Management Profiles are located within this site. Accessing the Pesticide Information Office's monthly newsletter, Chemically Speaking, may also be accomplished within the site.

A site containing similar and some of the same information as ours is found at the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS): <http://www.flaes.org/>. The site was recently overhauled with a new look, so if you had been there before, you'll find the navigation to be a bit different than previously.

Need fact sheets? Virtually any topic, pertaining to pesticides, pest control, agronomic production, or anything else may be found on the EDIS Home site: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>. Literally, thousands of guides written by authors throughout IFAS publish their information on this site. This site provides access to all of those short, concise, and factual guides.

The Crop Data Management System (CDMS) at <http://www.cdms.net> allows the user to access more than 100 pesticide manufacturers' product labels. The system is kept very current, but keep in mind that because the labels available through the site are not the actual product container's label, EPA does not consider them to be legal documents.

EPA's Ecotoxicity database contains toxicity information regarding wildlife, fish, and plant testing: <http://www.ipmcenters.org/Ecotox/DataAccess.cfm>. Any pesticide's active ingredient that has been required to undergo these

toxicity tests are listed on this site. You can access each active ingredient and enter any of the more than 200 species that are used in the various tests and view those results here.

If you wish to see if any pesticide product is registered for use in Florida, you can go to <http://state.ceris.purdue.edu/doc/fl/statefl.html>. You can search by active ingredient, brand name, sites of application, pest to be controlled, EPA registration number, or company's name. If you search by active ingredient, a listing of all state-registered products containing at least that active ingredient will be provided.

Fred Fishel

Soil Test

Soil tests taken immediately after harvest of cotton or peanut can be used to determine lime as well as fertility requirements for crops for the coming year. If soil pH needs adjusting, fall is a good time of the year to apply needed lime. This is because it may take as long as 6 months for lime to fully react. Although a portion of lime begins to work immediately, added time is always beneficial. This activity will improve nodulation since bacteria, the nitrogen fixers for peanut plants, do better with an adequate calcium level and with pH around 6.0 or higher.

David Wright

The use of trade names does not constitute a guarantee or warrant of products named and does not signify approval to the exclusion of similar products.

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